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SECURITY INFORMATION

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14 October 1952

Memorandum for Mr. Becker

Subject: Additional Estimative Support for Revision of NSC 107/2
(Iran)

1. As you know, we are already engaged in preparing NIE-75, "Probable Developments in Iran" and a study of special political capabilities for use in the revision of NSC 107/2. A need for further support is indicated by discussions in the Staff Assistants, and specifically with the State representative and the Army adviser.

2. These discussions indicate two problems:

(a) The Department of the Army expresses grave misgivings about the use of US [redacted] forces in Iran in the event of attempted or actual Communist seizure of power on the ground that such action would immediately cause the USSR to invoke the 1921 Treaty and intervene in force. At the Senior Staff meeting, and again in the Staff Assistants, State agreed to give the current legal view as to the applicability of that treaty. Subsequently State reported that its treatment of the point in the 1951 Staff Study for NSC 107/2 (see copy attached, paragraphs 26-27) represented its current view and the legal position that the Department would take. State quickly added, however, that the real question is not whether the USSR would be technically entitled to introduce its troops, but whether it would in fact do so, whether in the circumstances the rest of the world and specifically the UN would view such Soviet action as aggression and whether the 1921 treaty seriously affects either conclusion. In State's judgment, the answer to these questions should be sought through the IAC rather than unilaterally from State. I agreed.

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(b) While they have not said so in so many words, both the JCS and Army people strongly implied that their present planning for action in the event of an attempted or actual Communist seizure of power in Iran was extremely fragmentary, and in particular lacked an adequate statement of the possible circumstances that might surround this basic event, i.e., whether the initial seizure would take place in Tehran or elsewhere, whether

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the Army would be likely to be subverted or to remain anti-Communist, how the tribes would react, etc. There is some discussion of these points in the earlier Staff Study (specifically paragraphs 19, 22-23), but it is far from adequate as a basis for military planning or, for that matter, as a basis for planning [REDACTED]

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3. It seems to me that these two needs could be met appropriately by a special estimate dealing with the two issues in reverse, roughly as follows:

(a) What circumstances would probably surround an attempted or actual Communist seizure of power, in terms of centers of Communist and anti-Communist strength, position of the Iranian army, position of the tribes, etc.? The estimate would not attempt to assign exact degrees of probability to various sets of circumstances but simply to pick out a workable number, perhaps three or four, of the most likely sets of circumstances, in order to serve as a basis for planning.

(b) What would be the reaction of other nations to the use of US [REDACTED] in this event, with particular reference to the Soviet reaction, UN reaction, and the effect of the 1921 treaty on each?

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This is, of course, a brief outline, and the terms of reference would be expanded from this basis.

4. Assuming this project makes sense, its timing presents difficulties. It would be extremely difficult for O/NE to handle it concurrently with NIE-75, and it is the view of the O/NE staff that the work on NIE-75 will contribute substantially toward a satisfactory set of planning assumptions on point 3 (a) above, although it would not contribute so distinctly to 3 (b). On the other hand, the services may feel that the planning assumptions are a prerequisite to any activity on their part, so that from this standpoint 3 (a) at least would be more urgent even than NIE-75. So far as 3 (b) is concerned, it is my personal feeling that the Army is "fighting the problem" [REDACTED] awaiting any answer on these questions and should be instructed to assume that the use of US forces is to be undertaken, on the basis of a decision that takes into account all these factors; in other words, the planners do not need the answers to these questions, although the men who make the action decision certainly would.

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5. I propose to discuss this problem with Mr. ^{25X1A9a} [REDACTED] and would also recommend the following additional moves:

(a) Immediate consultation by me with the Defense, State, and JCS representatives.

(b) If time permits, perhaps somewhat more detailed terms of reference based on these consultations.

(c) Submission of the project by you at the Senior Staff meeting on Thursday.

May I have your judgment on these as soon as possible?

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[REDACTED]

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